

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 00571 131422Z

71

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 SAI-01 NIC-01 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

OMB-01 MC-02 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /140 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WADHDC 7704

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 0571

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, ETRN, PFOR, RO

SUBJECT: HELICOPTER SALE TO ROMANIA

REFS: A) BUCHAREST 100 (NOTAL) B) BUCHAREST 564; C) PARIS 3653

1. NO OFFICIAL DECISION ON HELICOPTER PROJECT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED BY ROMANIANS SO FAR AND FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE STILL IN THE DARK AS TO PRECISE TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT. VISIT TO BUCHAREST OF FRENCH FIRM, SNIAS, REPS LAST WEEK DREW NONCOMMITTAL RESPONSE; FRENCH REMAIN OPTIMISTIC NEVERTHELESS, AND ARE OPERATING UNDER ASSUMPTION THAT SNIAS PROPOSAL HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED BY FTO AND THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL CARRY LOT OF WEIGHT WITH LEADERSHIP, WHERE FINAL DECISION LIES.

2. LATEST DISCUSSION BETWEEN FRENCH AND VICE CHAIRMAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND PLANNING CHIEF MANEA MANESCU TOOK PLACE FEBRUARY 12 TO GO OVER SOME DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 2, BUT CONVERSATION INCLUDED NEW HELICOPTER CONTRACT. MANESCU REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN SITUATION (REF A) AND THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN

REACHED;HE AGREED THAT TALKS ON NEW HELICOPTER CONTRACT COULD
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BUCAR 00571 131422Z

CONTINUE DURING FEBRUARY METINGS. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT

FRENCH HOPE TO APPLY LEVER OF PRESENT SECOND PHASE ALOUETTE CONTRACT IN ORDER TO REACH AGREEMENT ON PUMA CONTRACT DURING ECONOMIC TALKS.

3. DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN, ACCORDING TO FRENCH EMBASSY, ON SECOND PHASE OF ALOUETTE HELICOPTER PROJECT AND FRENCH ARE PRESSING FOR THIS TO BE SIGNED DURING JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING.

4. WE ARE ALSO BEGINNING TO SEE INDICATIONS ARISING FROM VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES THAT DECISION ON HELICOPTER AND MEDIUM-RANGE JET AIRCRAFT PURCHASES MAY BE POSTPONED, ALONG WITH OTHER LARGE PROJECTS, AS PART OF POSSIBLE MAJOR REORIENTATION OF INVESTMENT PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES (REF B). WORLD WIDE FUEL AND RAW MATERIAL PROBLEMS AND IMBALANCES IN 1973 FULFILLMENT REPORT COULD BE AMONG THE CAUSES FOR RECONSIDERATION OF RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS.

5. DURING RECENT SERIES OF CALLS BY SIKORSKY REP GEORGE ROBINS ON GOR OFFICIALS WE COULD GET NO CLEAR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN EITHER PROPOSED TRIP TO ROMANIA BY SIKORSKY PURCHASING TEAM, OR IN VISIT TO ROMANIA BY SENIOR SIKORSKY AND UNITED AIRCRAFT OFFICIALS. MANY OTHER RECENT ATTEMPTS TO MEASURE LEVEL OF ROMANIAN INTEREST (INCLUDING DIRECT QUESTION TO PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU BY SECRETARY DENT WHICH, DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, WAS FINESSED BY CEAUSESCU) HAVE MET SIMILAR EVASION.

6. COMMENT: WE READ OVERALL SITUATION AS COMBINATION OF LEANING TOWARD FRENCH ON THIS SPECIFIC PROJECT IF IT GOES AHEAD, BUT IN GENERAL CONTEXT OF RECONSIDERATION OF THIS AND OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.
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